

Remarks

Claims 13, 14, 19, 41, 60-66, and 73-79 have been withdrawn from consideration. Claims 2, 20-22, 31, 32, 46, 51, and 52 are amended as set forth above. Claim 47 is canceled. Thus, claims 1-46 and 48-79 remain pending in the application. Portions of the specification are also amended as set forth above to correct minor typographical errors. The Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the application in accordance with the following remarks.

In the Office Action dated July 8, 2003, the Examiner objected to claims 20-22 based on certain informalities. In particular, portions of claims 20 and 21 lacked proper antecedent basis for the term "said outwardly extending portion." Claims 20 and 21, as amended, now include a proper antecedent basis. Claim 22 was objected to because of a typographical error. The Applicant has amended claim 22 as suggested by the Examiner. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully requests that the objections to claim 20-22 be withdrawn.

Claims 1-4, 6, 9-11, 16, 25-27, 31-33, 38, 46-49, 51-53, 55-58, and 67-72 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Jensen et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,220,456. The Jensen reference discloses a rack system having two posts. Support rails are mounted to the two posts for supporting computer equipment that is specially adapted for use with the support rails (See col. 3, lines 10-17). Each support rail includes a slot for accepting bolts that protrude from each side of a computer component chassis. The rails thereby provide vertical support for the chassis (See col. 3, lines 31-45).

The Jensen reference does not disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1. Claim 1 recites, among other things, an equipment attachment means coupled to a first lateral end of a vertical support member. The equipment attachment means defines a supporting point for a load. The Jensen reference does not disclose a vertical support member that has, coupled to a first lateral end of the vertical support member, an equipment attachment means that defines a supporting point for a load. In the Jensen reference, the slots provide supporting points for the computer component (See col. 3, lines 41-44). The slots are located along the length of a middle portion of the support rails (See Figs. 2-3). Thus, contrary to the assertions made in the Office

Action, the support rails do not include an equipment attachment means coupled to a first lateral end of the support rail and defining a supporting point for a load. Although the Examiner asserts that the flange 30 represents an equipment attachment means, the reference does not disclose or suggest that the flange 30 defines a supporting point for a load. Instead, the flange 30 merely serves to guide the chassis into the gap between rails attached to opposite posts (See col. 3, lines 63-64). Accordingly, the Jensen reference does not teach or suggest the invention defined by claim 1 or by any of its dependent claims.

Claim 2, as amended, further recites that the supporting point emulates a vertical upright in a four-post equipment rack that complies with EIA-310 standards. The EIA-310 standards define a particular spacing of holes. The Jensen reference does not teach or suggest a supporting point that emulates a vertical upright in a four-post equipment rack that complies with EIA-310 standards. The slot that provides support in the system described by the Jensen reference does not comply with the EIA-310 standards, and does not emulate a vertical upright in a four-post equipment rack. Accordingly, claim 2 is neither taught nor suggested by the Jensen reference.

Claim 4 recites that the load comprises a sliding assembly. Jensen et al. does not teach an equipment attachment means, coupled to a first lateral end of a vertical support member, defining a supporting point for a sliding assembly. The support rail described in the reference allows horizontal movement of the computer component chassis. The support rail itself is merely described as supporting a computer component chassis and not supporting a sliding assembly. Accordingly, the Jensen reference fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 4.

Claim 9 recites that the means for securing the coupling member to the two-post rack comprises a rack attachment flange coupled to the second lateral end of the vertical support member. The Jensen reference does not disclose a rack attachment flange coupled to a second lateral end of a vertical support member. The disclosed support rail is attached to the rack using a bracket 22 connected near the middle of the support rail, and not using a flange coupled to a lateral end of the support rail (See Fig. 3). Therefore, claim 9 and its dependent claims are believed to be allowable over the Jensen reference.

Independent claim 31 recites a first coupling member coupled at a lateral end to, and independently extending substantially horizontally outward from, a first post and a second coupling member coupled at a lateral end to, and independently extending substantially horizontally outward from, a second post. The first coupling member replicates at least one post in a four-post equipment rack, and the second coupling member replicates at least one post in the four-post equipment rack. As discussed above in connection with claim 9, the Jensen reference fails to teach or suggest coupling members that are coupled at a lateral end to a first or a second post in a two-post rack. Accordingly, claim 31 and its dependent claims are neither taught nor suggested by the Jensen reference.

Independent claim 46 recites a method that includes coupling independent four-post replicating mounting points on a two-post equipment rack. The mounting points comprise two or more independent coupling members that are each adapted to support four-post loads at a first lateral end and to attach to only one respective post at a second lateral end. The Jensen reference does not teach coupling members that are adapted to support four-post loads at a first lateral end and to attach to a post at a second lateral end. The support rail described in the reference is adapted to support a load using a slot that is located substantially along a length of the support rail but not at a lateral end. Furthermore, the support rail attaches to a post using a bracket near the middle of the support rail rather than at an end. Thus, the Jensen reference does not teach or suggest the invention defined by claim 46 or any of its dependent claims.

Independent claim 51 recites a first coupling member and a second coupling member that emulate two of the four posts in a four-post rack with each emulated post defining a supporting point for a load. Similarly, independent claim 52 recites first, second, third, and fourth coupling members, with each of the coupling members emulating one respective post in a four-post rack and each emulated post defining a supporting point for a load. The Jensen reference does not teach or suggest coupling members that emulate posts in a four-post rack, with each emulated post defining a supporting point for a load. Thus, claims 51 and 52 and their respective dependent claims are not anticipated by or obvious in view of the Jensen reference.

Independent claim 67 recites an equipment support device that includes a rack attachment means, an equipment attachment means coupled to the rack attachment means, and a coupling feature for connecting the support device to adjacent equipment support devices. The Examiner asserts that adjacent support devices 20 rest upon each other and are therefore connected to one another. Although the Jensen reference does not explicitly state that that the adjacent support rails 20 rest upon each other, Figure 1 suggests that they might. However, simply being in contact with one another does not teach or suggest a coupling feature for connecting one support device to an adjacent support device. Accordingly, claim 67 is not taught or suggested by the Jensen reference.

Independent claims 68 and 72 recite a two-post to four-post adapter operable to support a device having a four-post rack-mounting configuration and mounting the device to the two-post to four-post adapter. The Jensen reference does not disclose such a feature. The computer component chassis that is supported in the disclosed system does not have a four-post rack-mounting configuration nor is the support rail operable to support a device having a four-post rack-mounting configuration. Instead, the support rail serves to support the computer component chassis using stand-off bolts that engage the support rails. Thus, the Jensen reference does not disclose or suggest the limitations of claims 68 and 72 and their respective dependent claims.

Claims 1-3, 5-9, 11, 12, 16-18, 20, 21, 23-35, 38-40, and 42-56 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Siemon et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,542,549. The Siemon reference discloses a cross-connect frame that, among other things, can be used with stand-off brackets. The stand-off brackets are used for mounting the cross-connect frame. In other words, the cross-connect frame 10 can be mounted on the stand-off brackets 30 (See col. 4, lines 10-14). The stand-off bracket 30 includes an end flap 69 for fastening the stand-off bracket 30 to a relay rack, wall, or other surfaces (See col. 4, lines 17-22). The Siemon reference does not disclose or suggest that the stand-off bracket can be used to support equipment or to emulate a post in a four-post rack. In fact, the manner in which the Siemon reference depicts mounting equipment on the cross-connect frame would preclude use of the stand-off brackets as an emulated post.

Claim 1 recites an equipment attachment means defining a supporting point for a load and being adapted to secure to a load. The Examiner asserts that the end flap 69 of the stand-off bracket 30 corresponds to the claimed equipment attachment means. However, the Siemon reference does not teach or suggest that the end flap 69 defines a supporting point for a load or is adapted to secure to a load. Instead, the end flap is for fastening the stand-off bracket to a relay rack, wall, or other surfaces (i.e., for fastening the stand-off bracket to an object that maintains the stand-off bracket in a fixed location). Thus, claim 1 and its dependent claims are not taught or suggested by the Siemon reference.

Claim 31 recites a first coupling member and a second coupling member. Each coupling member replicates at least one post in a four-post equipment rack. The Siemon reference fails to teach or suggest that the stand-off brackets 30 replicate at least one post in a four-post equipment rack. Similarly, claim 46 recites coupling four-post replicating mounting points comprising coupling members that are adapted to support four-post loads. Again, the reference does not teach or suggest adapting the stand-off brackets to support four-post equipment. Claim 51 recites a first coupling member and a second coupling member that emulate two of the four posts in a four-post rack with each emulated post defining a supporting point for a load. Similarly, claim 52 recites first, second, third, and fourth coupling members, with each of the coupling members emulating one respective post in a four-post rack and each emulated post defining a supporting point for a load. The Siemon reference does not teach or suggest coupling members that emulate posts in a four-post rack, with each emulated post defining a supporting point for a load. Accordingly, the reference does not teach or suggest the limitations of claims 31, 46, 51, or 52 or any of their dependent claims.

Claim 22 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Siemon et al. Claim 22 depends from claim 1. Because the Siemon reference fails to teach or suggest the limitations of claim 1, claim 22 is also not disclosed or suggested by the reference. Moreover, unlike the situation in *In re Dailey*, 357 F.2d 669, 149 USPQ 47 (CCPA 1966), in which the configuration of the claimed object was merely a matter of obvious design choice, forming the terminating portions at an obtuse angle has significance in terms of potentially

Applicant : Robert H. Milmitch, III et al.
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enhancing the resulting rack, as described in the original application with respect to FIGS. 11A and 11B.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter with respect to claims 15 and 59.

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice to that effect.

Enclosed is a \$210.00 check for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. No other fees are believed to be due at this time. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Date: 1/16/04

Respectfully submitted,



Spencer C. Patterson
Reg. No. 43,849

Fish & Richardson P.C.
5000 Bank One Center
1717 Main Street
Dallas, Texas 75201
Telephone: (214) 292-4082
Facsimile: (214) 747-2091

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